

Networking Conference Sense-Abilities

Dancing Language: The Language of Sensibilities

A RAM workshop that integrates dance, language arts and resiliency

Presented by Mary Ann Lee and Peggy Schanz

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Dancing, Bill T. Jones and Susan Kuklin

When I dance, I use parts of me, and I use all of me.

Before I dance, I warm my body, and I stretch my body.

I want to dance.

When I am dancing, I can make lines, and I can make curves.

When I am dancing, I can fly high and soar through the air.

But I've got to come down and dance on the ground.

When I am dancing, I am thinking and I am feeling.

When I am dancing, I am everywhere, and I am hardly there.

When I am dancing, I am everyone, and I am only one.

In this workshop, we shall look at the words in this book as a template for building a dance. The exploration begins with warming the body so that it is ready to move. Once the body is warm, one is ready to move through space or to locomote. We shall move through space and use the elements of dance: space, time and energy. We shall explore how to take simple locomotor steps and gestures and begin to make them dance. Alone and in groups, we shall create dances that are personal and universal.

Through dance, the lesson will explore sounds, words, sentences, poems and stories. The imagery for moving will come from the language arts curriculum. Think of *dancing-language* as a combination of two separate things that become something new. This often occurs in compound words like butter and fly. Each word has a separate meaning, but when one combines the words, they become something different and new. A butterfly has its own meaning. This is also true in visual arts. Yellow and blue are unique, but when one combines them, they make a new color that is green.

The language arts component of this workshop that will be integrated with dance will focus on word knowledge, fluency, comprehension and writing. The dance component will focus on the elements of dance: space, time and energy and how one combines them to create dances.

Standard Three of the Utah State language arts core curriculum states: The student will use graphophonic cues to decode words. Decoding words and using cueing system to monitor and guide comprehension of text exist in the curriculum from kindergarten through sixth grade. We shall explore these ideas and work with challenging areas of the curriculum.

Standard Four states: Students begin to monitor and guide their comprehension of text through listening. Students develop independence in reading. Our dance explorations will focus on listening and reading.

Standards Six, Seven and Eight explore writing. We shall explore writing and use it as a springboard for moving and creating dances.

All of the Utah State Core Curriculum dance targets kindergarten through sixth grade include moving, investigating, creating and connecting. In each aspect of the workshop, we shall explore these elements and relate them the specific dance targets at each grade level.

Sounds and Words

Kindergarten: Rhyming words and space, time and energy

*Note: Virginia Tanner created this incredible warm up and example of *dancing-language*.

Round your back over as round as a ball.
Stretch your back up and be very tall.
Put your hands on the floor and look back at the wall.
Curl yourself up and be very small.
Jump up and say, "That's all!"
No, let's call Paul who is in the hall.
Do a great big stretch and a quiet, slow fall.

The above sequence uses rhyming words to describe a sequence that warms the body. It uses space, rhythmic phrasing and energy.

In groups, compose a short sequence of rhyming words that dance. Use changes in space, time and energy.

First Grade: Long and short vowels

Apes like apples.
Let's eat some elephants.
In the ocean lives an octopus.
The ice is in the igloo.
The University of Utah is under the umbrella.

As suggested by Bill T. Jones in *Dancing*, "I can use parts of me, and I use all of me."

2nd grade: consonant blends and digraphs: Float, flutter, flicker, flop. Shy Sheila shakes soft shimmering silks.

Create a short movement sequence of rhyming words or consonant blend sequences. Change the space, time and energy.

3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th: Homonyms : Mr. See and Mr. Soar

Mr. See owned a saw
And Mr. Soar owned a seesaw.
Now See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw
Before Soar saw See
Which made Soar sore.
Had Soar seen See's saw
Before See sawed Soar's seesaw,
See's saw would not have sawed
Soar's seesaw.
So See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw.
But it was a shame to see Soar so sore
Just because See's saw sawed
Soar's seesaw.

A Twister of Twists, A tangler of Tongues, Tongue Twisters Collected by Alvin Schwartz, ISBN-0-397-31412-4

Sentences: Parts of speech and how to move them

Poems: A model from Africa

The Song for the Sun That Disappeared Behind the Rainclouds
Hottentot tribe

The fire darkens, the wood turns black.
The flame extinguishes, misfortune upon us.
God sets out in search of the sun.
The rainbow sparkles in his hand,
The bow of the divine hunter.
He has heard the lamentations of his children.
He walks along the milky way, he collects the stars.
With quick arms he piles them into a basket
piles them up with quick arms
like a woman who collects lizards
and piles them into her pot, piles them
until the pot overflows with lizards
until the basket overflows with light.

Think about a rainstorm or a snowstorm or a big wind blowing or an eclipse or a very hot day, and imagine that there are super-beings in the sky who are trying to bring things back to normal, just as the god in this poem wants to get rid of the darkness and so goes out to collect stars in a basket to make the world light again. Write a poem which tells the story of how the super-being changes what is happening so that it get better in the world. From Kenneth Koch's *Rose, where did you get that red?*, ISBN 0-394-48431

Write a model poem together. Use action words and energy words. Move the poem.

Stories

Sense Pass King is a model. The dances in this story are: isolation, tyranny, scrap instruments, languages, planting, harvesting, snakes, animal languages, moles, turbulent waters, working together

The gifts that the village gives Sense Pass King are love, compassion, courage, wisdom, individuality, creativity and joy.

As a group, write a story that includes:

A Character who is the hero

Setting

Plot: Conflict and resolution

Beginning, middle, end

What is the theme? What are you as the author trying to tell us or teach us?

Dance rubric:

Make the story a whole. Think of transitions.

Use all of the elements of dance: space, time and energy

Use abstraction.

Add music.

Music CD: A collect of music from West Africa and inspired by it

1. WAKAFRIKA (Manu Diango)
2. DANSE BAMOUN (from Cameroon)
3. THE COAST (Paul Simon)
4. BIDINTE (from Guinea-Bissau)
5. AMI OH! (Manfred Ebanda)
6. HIGH PRIEST (from Drums of Passion)
7. SONGHAY KOMBI AND ETTELBEL (from Niger)
8. THE WELL (Seydu)
9. AYINDE (from Drums of Passion)
10. DANSE DE FETE (from Cameroon)

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Sense Pass King is the name of the new work that Children's Dance Theatre will premiere April 4 (7:30PM) and 5 (2:00PM), 2003 at the Capitol Theatre. The original muical score is by Tristan Moore. Chuck Davis, African American dancer, choreographer and teacher will join Children's Dance Theatre. There will be two infinity workshops, Wednesday, April 3: 4:30-6:00PM and Saturday, April 12 location and time TBA. Lesson plans will be available by March 1. Please email Mary Ann Lee for a copy.

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